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Carrying a big stick

After a roller-coaster month, the Big Four political parties and the Interim Electoral Council finally isolated the CPN-M, and are pushing through with the 19 November polls.

In a week of fast-paced events, Mohan Baidya's CPN-M made one last ditch attempt to salvage its reputation for being a spoiler. After smaller parties led by Ashok Rai and Upendra Yadav worked out compromises and agreed to go for polls, Baidya was feeling increasingly isolated.

President Ram Baran Yadav tried to bring the CPN-M on board and convened an all-party meeting on 13 September during which it looked like Baidya was actually willing to concede most of his demands. He just needed a face-saver in the form of Chairman Khil Raj Regmi leaving his Chief Justice post. The surprise visit by Indian Foreign Secretary Sujata Singh seemed to change everything: when the party leaders reconvened on Sunday at Shital Niwas, the other parties suddenly became inflexible and rejected outright the CPN-M's conditions for polls. The Big Four also prevailed on the Election Commission to put off submission of final candidate lists by a week.

The question now is what the CPN-M will do. Regmi sent a message by meeting Army Chief Gaurav Rana on the army's possible role in defanging Baidya's boys. The arms haul this week showed that there are still lots of weapons out there.

The UCPN(M) will be affected the most by the CPN-M staying away, the NC and UML will gain, but it will be the 60 per cent undecideds who will swing the November election.

Kunda Dixit



UNCHAINED

A unique project in Chitwan shows that domesticated elephants don't need to be chained in corrals, and the new solar-powered electric fences can also protect settlements from wild elephant attacks.

PAGE 10-11



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DÉJÀ VU

Not even if someone wanted to deliberately sabotage the country would they be as successful as the Seven Minus One party alliance running this country. We have given them credit where it is due in this space. We have tried to look at the glass as half full and tried to convince ourselves (and you) that we should cut the politicians some slack. After all, they have brought us this far since April 2006.

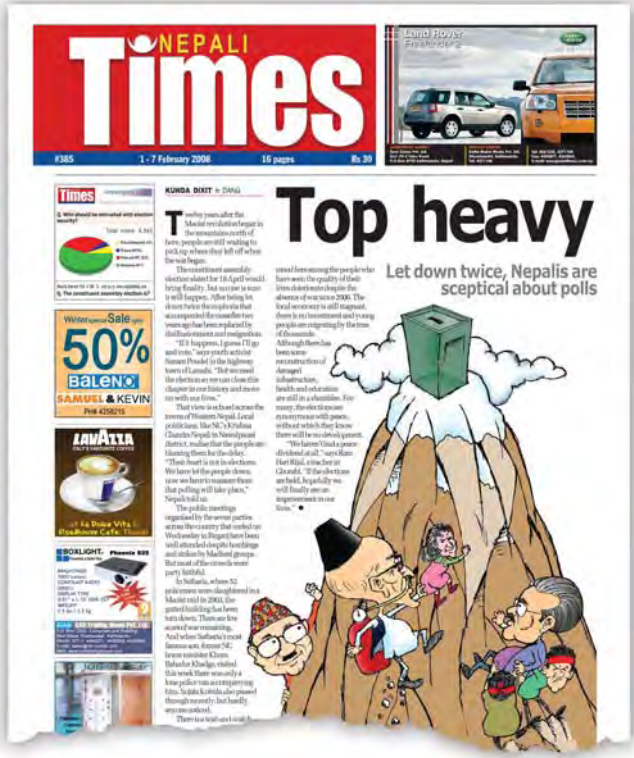
Yes, it has taken longer than it should. Yes, our rulers have behaved as if there is no tomorrow. But the country is now finally coming to the grand finale of this messy transition. What has happened in this country is an extraordinary makeover of our state structure with relatively little violence. The reason it is taking longer than expected is also because of the conspiracies of status quoists and those extremists who still haven't given up their futile dream of a communist utopia.

But the main reason for the current instability is because of the individual short-sightedness of our political leaders and their collective fecklessness. They have achieved what we all thought was impossible: to fritter away the gains of the pro-democracy uprising of April 2006, let the people down once again and be a total failure in governance. Compared to this, at least where it concerns service delivery, the dictatorial monarchy is beginning to look like the golden years. It takes breath-taking incompetence and a complete lack of accountability to succeed in being so unsuccessful.

The breakdown of law and order is so complete that a paramilitary police force armed with automatic weapons cannot open a major highway artery when it is blocked by a couple of tyre-burning hooligans because one of them was arrested for robbery.

The people's disgust at the crippling shortages of

The more things change, the more they remain the same.



fuel, power and water is now turning into outrage. Yet, even at a time of deep crisis like this all our rulers can do is sling mud at each other, blame everyone but themselves and warn of dark conspiracies afoot. The public's opinion of politicians in Kathmandu is mud. They have stopped expecting any

statesmanship from this bunch, and are getting on with their lives despite unprecedented hardships.

It is precisely because the people now have a chance to throw out this class of failed politicians that they are so scared of elections. Time to give power (both political and electric) back to the people.

The above lines were not written this week. They are reprinted verbatim here from an editorial in *Nepali Times* (#388) three months before the last election for a Constituent Assembly that was postponed thrice before being finally held in May 2008.

It is a sign of the times that not much has changed in that time. The same politicians are tackling the same issues, there is the same ambivalence about facing the people, the same failure of governance, and we are electing the same number of members with the same procedures. There are very few indicators to make us hopeful that things will be any different in 2013 compared to 2008.

This is the least damaging of all other options. No one who believes in democracy can be against elections. We just have to ensure that it is peaceful, independent, and fair. People must be allowed to vote freely and fearlessly. Any party that uses intimidation, threats or cheats has to be dealt with swiftly and forcefully, unlike in 2008.

The foremost challenge is to make sure the CPN-M leadership and cadre do not obstruct polling even if they don't take part. If they resort to violence and sabotage, the full force of the state must come down upon them.

In November, the people will send a message by electing the candidates they deem most likely to serve the country and people with integrity and efficiency. As we said in this space five years ago: the leaders have messed things up, it's time to hand power back to the people.

ON THE WEB
www.nepalitimes.com

ELECTION MIRAGE

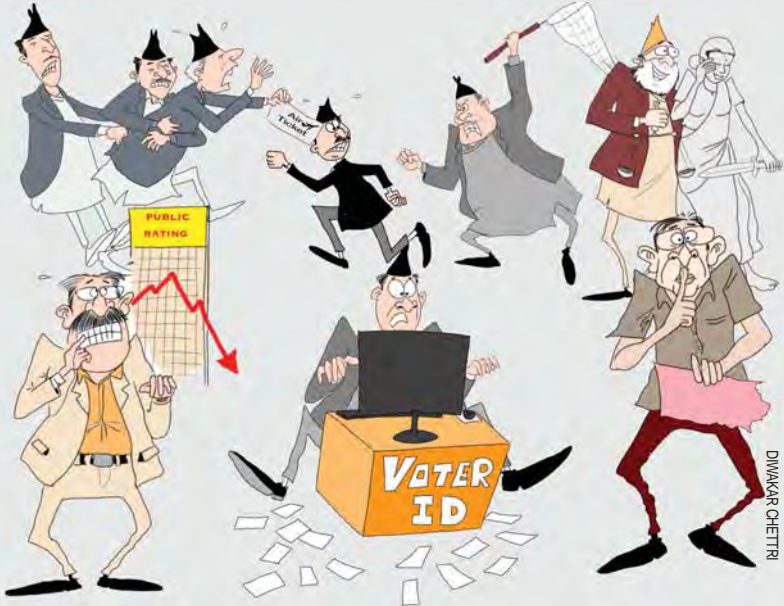
Like the editorial quite rightly points out, November's elections are a complete farce (The election mirage, #673). Half the leaders say they are willing to push back the deadline to appease dissenting parties and the other half say postponing polls is impossible. Who do we believe? Despite multiple 'all party meetings' there is no concrete roadmap two months before 19 November. The parties need to stop this charade, come clean to the Nepali people, and tell us elections aren't happening on time. That way we can get on with our lives.

GVR

- What Nepali leaders don't seem to realise is that they have turned this country into a joke in the eyes of the international community. Nepal has been 'trying' to write a new constitution for the past five years. Forget the constitution, the government seems incapable of holding 'transitory' elections on time. The misguided youngsters who took out a protest rally this weekend declaring that 'Buddha was born in Nepal' would do well to rechannel that energy and make sure that politicians are held accountable and not allowed to postpone polls at any cost.

Jess D

- For the love of Pashupatinath, someone tell our leaders that CA elections is only the first step towards creating a Naya Nepal. And we have been stuck on square one for more than a year. How long until



our patience runs out?

Suman Karki

- So an obdurate and rather senile Mohan Baidya (with the help of his select coterie) is single-handedly derailing all the achievements of the past seven years and 26 million Nepalis are going to sit on the sidelines and watch the disaster unravel? The 18,000 plus lives that were wasted during the war must be cursing us from their graves.

Bijaya

SACRIFICIAL LAMBS

Something went terribly wrong while trying to bring the Maoist party out of the jungle and into the democratic mainstream (Dasain's sacrificial lambs by Muma Ram Khanal, #673). Today both Dahal and Baidya factions behave as if they own Nepal and that we

Nepalis owe them something in return for the great 'revolution'. I wouldn't vote for these goons even if they offered me a big chunk of their parties' treasury which was stolen from the people in the first place. In fact if we really care for the country, we need to show our anger and dissatisfaction at the ballot box by making sure that the UCPN (M) and CPN-M are defeated by large margins.

Lulu

IMMIGRATION WOES

Arresting some corrupt officials may not be the solution to corruption, but it is a good start. (Too little too late by Sunir Pandey and Bhrikuti Rai, #673) But the CIAA should try to catch some bigger fish.

Luv Nepal

- A perfect case of Nepalis pulling other Nepalis down. This disgusting

trend has been going on for too long for people to be surprised at such stories anymore. An incident becomes news for a day, stays in readers' minds for a week, so-called social activists and civil society leaders organise protests for a month and then it's back to normal. Corrupt officials go on about their duty collecting dashain kharcha, chiya pani from fellow Nepalis who actually know what it's like to toil hard for money. Nepalis who seem to be so angered by some lame-ass Indian show's claim about the Buddha being born in India and have the energy to organise all sorts of protests should do something about corrupt immigration people who prey on fellow Nepalis.

Nepali Bahini

- Last week, a Nepali women married to an Australian got her spouse visa and was supposed to catch a flight to Australia. She was not allowed to board by airport immigration. The officer on duty wanted a bribe. Jai Nepal

Samrat

I am still willing to give the CIAA the benefit of the doubt, but given Lokman Singh Karki's background, including his controversial role in the so-called gold-scandal during the royal regime, and his willingness to act as an attack dog of the bench against the bar, his motives are becoming questionable.

Idea

TOILET TALK

I hope the next CNN hero will be someone building toilets in Nepal, not one more feel good story about

someone who runs a children's home. (Oh, shit by Kunda Dixit, #673). Toilets will save more lives.

Sunburygrl

- Full of great turns of phrases. Review does full justice to Rose George's book, The Big Necessity.

Giles

LAND OF HER MOTHER

I had been eagerly waiting for Tsering Wangmo Dhompa's A home in Tibet (Land of her mother, #673). After reading Kunda Dixit's review, I am even more excited to get my hands on the book.

Kelsang

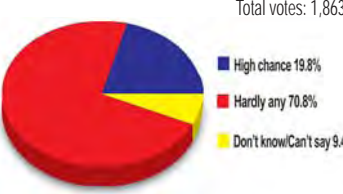
- Full of appreciation of Tsering Wangmo for overcoming the loss of her mother, travelling back to our motherland to pen this book. It brought tears to my eyes to read the excerpts. I will make sure I get the book.

Namche



nepalnews.com
Weekly Internet Poll #674

Q. What is the biggest threat to free and fair elections?



Weekly Internet Poll # 675. To vote go to: www.nepalitimes.com

Q. Do you agree that there should be 601 CA members again?



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A faith in revolution

The Maoists' willingness to learn from history and induct Hindu priests into the fold is itself quite revolutionary

The countdown to Nepal's second Constituent Assembly has begun. Parties are busy finalising candidate lists and election manifestos, while those trailing behind try to catch up to retain their role and relevance in Nepali politics in the days to come.



BY THE WAY
Anurag Acharya

Despite the failure of the first CA, and despite disillusionment with politicians, Nepalis are still generally upbeat about elections. In the remaining 60 days of campaigning, there will be intense debate among candidates and the electorate about the kind of Nepal the next CA will, or should, deliver. The contentious issues of secularism and identity-based federalism will once more dominate that discussion. These values were enshrined by the 2006 People's Movement, the Madhesh Uprising of 2007 and the strong mobilisation by Janajatis and Dalits inside and outside the last CA. But the grievances and conflicting aspirations

also created faultlines, dividing the nation and creating serious tension between communities.

In the last five years, the growing rift between the hill caste Hindus and other ethnic groups became politicised, polarising the CA and dividing society. Janajati CA members formed a cross-party political caucus demanding recognition of identity (historical, cultural, linguistic, geographic and ethnic) as the basis for carving out a future federal state

The demand was actively supported by a loose network of indigenous and ethnic groups led by scholars, academics and professionals from various backgrounds.

The ethnic and indigenous communities who follow various forms of Shamanism and Buddhism, felt robbed of their vibrant linguistic traditions and cultural practices to be co-opted into a monolithic Hindu zeitgeist of the Gorkha Empire, organised themselves across political ideologies inside and outside the CA, calling for recognition of identity as the basis for carving out future federal states.

The Maoist leadership understood these underlying grievances during the early years of their 'People's War'



NT ARCHIVE

and exploited it to mobilise fighters. But they also provided a foundation and strength to a Dalit movement which created political and social awareness against caste-based discrimination, which legislations have failed to deliver even after decades.

A small but organised mobilisation by Muslims also strengthened demand for secularism in a country that was perceived to be predominantly Hindu. The aspiration for a secular republic was built on historical exclusion and an expression of resistance against the hegemony of the traditional ruling class and castes. The conflict and the 2006 movement provided the necessary

articulation and expression of this demand.

During the conflict, revolutionary Maoist guerrillas desecrated temples, harassed Brahmin priests and bombed Sanskrit schools. This attempt to emulate the Chinese cultural revolution has now come full circle with the induction this week of priests into the party rank and file. The party seems to have realised that secularism is not just about non-discrimination between the faithful, it is also about being tolerant of them.

The fact that the comrades are ready to unlearn badly interpreted Marxist dictum is no less a revolutionary act. It is also the cold electoral calculus

of reassuring influential, conservative forces in society that the party is not necessarily anti-religion.

This isn't as incongruous as some may think: the most prominent leftists in modern political history have been unapologetically religious, from South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, to leader of American black movement Martin Luther King Jr, to the liberation theologians of Latin America. In his own words, Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama calls himself 'half-Marxist' and 'half-Buddhist'.

Leftist intellectual Shyam Shrestha feels that UCPN-M's acceptance of multi-party democracy, right to private property, and secularism in its real sense is an indication that Nepal's left movement is finally coming out of the ideological corner it had painted itself into. "It was not part of their original plan but a political recourse taken in line with larger social realities. The global left movement has learned from the failure of Soviet Russia and Mao's China, and it is time Nepal's communists realised that too," reckons Shrestha.

More than a return to religion, it is the culture of corruption that has damaged the party and its leaders more in the run-up to the 19 November elections. However, the political actions of a party or moral degeneration of a leader can neither undermine nor discredit aspirations of the millions they champion, or pretend to. 📌



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MORE THAN SKIN DEEP

Smile, cosmetic dentistry is here and it can change your personality

TSERING DOLKER GURUNG

In his dental clinic in Baluwatar, Sushil Koirala (the dentist, not the politician) sees a dozen patients a day.

None of them have tooth aches. In the waiting room, there are students waiting to leave for studies overseas, brides to be, aspiring beauty pageant contestants, television personalities and even politicians.

Koirala's Vedic Smiles is no

ordinary dental clinic: like some others in town it specialises in cosmetic dentistry to bring the smile back on the faces of people with crooked teeth, and with minimally invasive procedures.

"People have become more aware about their looks and are now taking the step to change what they can," explains Koirala. "Uneven teeth affects not just the mouth, but also a person's overall looks and personality."

Dental clinics specialising in cosmetic surgery in Kathmandu

are particularly packed just before the wedding season when brides and grooms jostle to find a slot in long waiting lists to get teeth polished or straightened.

Nepalis are not known as a people who spend a lot of time or money on their teeth. After all, there are barely 1,000 dentists for the country's 28 million people, and 75 per cent of the surgeons are practicing in Kathmandu. However, there is growing awareness about keeping teeth not just healthy but, increasingly, straightening them for good looks.

While scaling is still the most popular treatment, an increasing number of people are opting for more complex procedures such as full mouth reconstruction and smile enhancement surgery.

Besides being a marker for happiness, a smile also indicates a person's well-being, social acceptance and level of self-confidence. And whether a smile is dazzling or not depends a lot on the teeth inside the mouth.

When people look at other people's faces, it is the mouth region that stands out. A

pout, a grimace, tight-lipped determination or a smile are all clues to a person's demeanour, personality, or mood.

Non-invasive cosmetic dentistry removes the hassle of wearing braces, and the treatment is becoming popular with both young and old. While braces are still needed for seriously mis-aligned teeth, crowns or artificial teeth improve a patient's looks by improving bite and the facial silhouette.

"I had crooked teeth all my teenage years, it made me



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BIKRAM RAI




smile looks much better,” Shrestha (pictured above) told *Nepali Times*.

Koirala (pictured left) says cosmetic dentistry is more than just about enhancing beauty, but has a positive psychological impact. “Patients who were afraid to smile are transformed,” he says. “They become more cheerful, confident, easy-going and friendly.”

Koirala’s minimally invasive cosmetic dentistry treatment protocol has gained recognition not just in Nepal, but abroad—he is often found on the international lecture circuit. His holistic, nature-based approach takes into account the patient’s psychological aspects, ethnic background and actual health needs.

Last week, Koirala opened another clinic based on his philosophy of ‘do-no-harm dentistry’, which promotes his minimally-invasive cosmetic dentistry protocol. Also, Koirala has signed up with Thammasat University in Thailand to establish an international training centre in Bangkok. Similar centres are planned in India, Sri Lanka, China and Bangladesh.

Says Koirala: “If we are ethical, take a patient’s overall health and psychological needs into account, we can reduce the cost of dentistry. This is what we hope to demonstrate through this clinic.”

Indeed, the facilities now available for cosmetic dentistry promises not just a much-needed service to Nepalis, but also encourages medical dental tourism. 

a shy and unsmiling person,” says journalist Kumar Acharya. “Now, in my forties, after fixing my teeth, my whole face and personality has changed.”

Another of Koirala’s patients is Niju Dahal who got a full-mouth reconstruction five years ago and is glad she went ahead with the procedure. “I always wanted perfect white teeth and now I have them,” she says, confiding that her confidence level has got a boost and she is now more outgoing.

Maoist politician Narayan Kaji Shrestha had a gap in his front teeth and rarely smiled. After cosmetic dentistry, Koirala removed the gap and today Shrestha is seldom seen on television without a smile, even during tense negotiations.

“It has changed my personality. People say my

Designer faces

Medical schools in Nepal are now churning out doctors and dental surgeons, and there is growing demand from students to specialise in cosmetic dentistry. And just for that purpose along comes a book co-authored by Nepali dental surgeon Sushil Koirala and his Singaporean colleague, cosmetic dentist, Adrian Yap.

A *Clinical Guide to Direct Cosmetic Restorations* should be required reading for medical college libraries in Nepal and the subcontinent. Although too technical for the layman, the authors have applied Vedic definitions of beauty in a unique classification for use in aesthetic dentistry. The smile is classified into six different types depending on emotion, facial and eyes expressions, lip movement, visibility of teeth, sound and body gestures. The Sanskrit word, ‘smita’, for example means ‘smile’, and ‘hasita’ means ‘laugh’.



A Clinical Guide To Direct Cosmetic Restorations by Sushil Koirala and Adrian Yap
Dental Tribune International Leipzig, 2008

Through the experience of his practice in Nepal, Koirala has identified the main dental deformities which are not just the cause of health problems but also affect the looks, personality and self-confidence of patients. And once the problem is identified, the authors say, it is possible to ‘design a smile’ best suited to you. For all this, fixing one’s teeth is important: not just for appearance but also for speech defects and other issues of oral health. Nepal would probably be a much better place if our politicians smiled more. But for that, like Maoist leader Narayan Kaji Shrestha, they’d first need to get their teeth fixed.

EVEREST BANK BIZ BRIEFS

New ride

Pooja International Nepal launched Volkswagen New Polo GT TSI and New Cross Polo at the NADA Auto Show held last week. POLO GT TSI comes with TSI engine and 7-speed DSG automatic gearbox while the Cross Polo has new bumpers, body cladding, roof rails, new alloy wheels and a 5-speed manual gearbox.



Happy Dasain

Nepal General Marketing, authorised distributor of Hero two-wheelers for Nepal, has launched the ‘Hero Blockbuster Deal’. Customers buying Hero motorbikes and scooters can get a cash discount of up to Rs 7,500 and portable speaker radio from Philips, the company said in a press statement. Cash prizes of Rs 100,000, Rs 75,000 and Rs 50,000, through lucky draws are also up for grabs.



Together for tourism

Qatar Airways sponsored Tourism and Aviation Next 2013 held on 19 September. The focus of this conference was to engage major stake-holders of Nepal Tourism to develop a premium tourism model, read the press statement.



Cheers to that

United Spirits has launched McDowell’s No 1 Cariba Rum. It is a blend of premium Caribbean rum and matured Indian spirits with unmatched smoothness and sophisticated experience, the company said in statement. Cariba is available in 750 ml, 375 ml and 180 ml packs.



Hot wheels

New models of Yamaha Ray Z scooter was launched at NADA Auto show last week. The new model adopts the same air-cooled 115cc 4 stroke engine as Ray with SOHC, 2 valve, single cylinder petrol engine reads the press statement.



Customer Meet

M.A.W Enterprises, the sole distributor of JCM construction and heavy equipments organised a customer meet in Dhangadi on 16 September. The meet was organised with the aim to bring together people from the construction field, reads the press statement.

Brand new

Syakar Trading, the sole distributor of Honda Motorcycle and scooter announced the launch of New Honda Activa-I at the NADA Auto show last week. The new Activa-I is priced at Rs 150,900 and will be available in 4 colours.



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Building dream homes



Located in the heart of Kathmandu, Panipokhari Heights is set to take the real estate world by storm. Designed with discerning families in mind, this premium residential development is spread over 20 ropanies. The project broke ground in October 2012 and is scheduled to be completed by mid-2014 with 50 luxury houses. Nepali Times sat down with Sheela Pradhan, marketing executive for Shiva Corporate and Landmark Developer, to learn more about this exciting project.

Nepali Times: What are the things to look forward to in this project?
Sheela Pradhan: Apart from top-of-the-line facilities, there are many other great features. Take for example the intercoms located in each house. They connect directly to the front gate to allow immediate guest access. As the homes are still in construction, room specifications can be customised to our clients' will. The homes are three and half storied with a basement, parking space and a small garden. The development is also conveniently located, close to government offices, police stations, water supply and a hospital. Additionally, Lajimpat offers a wide variety of shops, department stores and restaurants.

What is the most attractive feature about Panipokhari Heights?
The best aspect of the project is that it is a joint venture between three reputed construction companies: CE Construction, Shiva Corporate Connection and Jyoti Group. Each of the homes is built in neo-classical style and available in color-customisable Egyptian marble.

Are these homes a good investment for a discerning homebuyer?
Apart from the prime location, the price per anna is only 4 million. So because of the prime location and low initial investment, the value of the homes will only increase. It is a great investment if you plan to later sell or rent your home.

What kind of financing options are available?
We have a flexible financial plan where buyers will need to pay a down payment of 40% initially and the remaining 60% can be rendered through bank finance provisions for up to 20 years.



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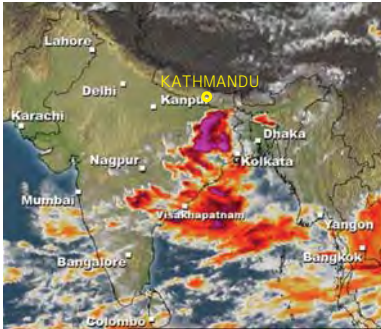
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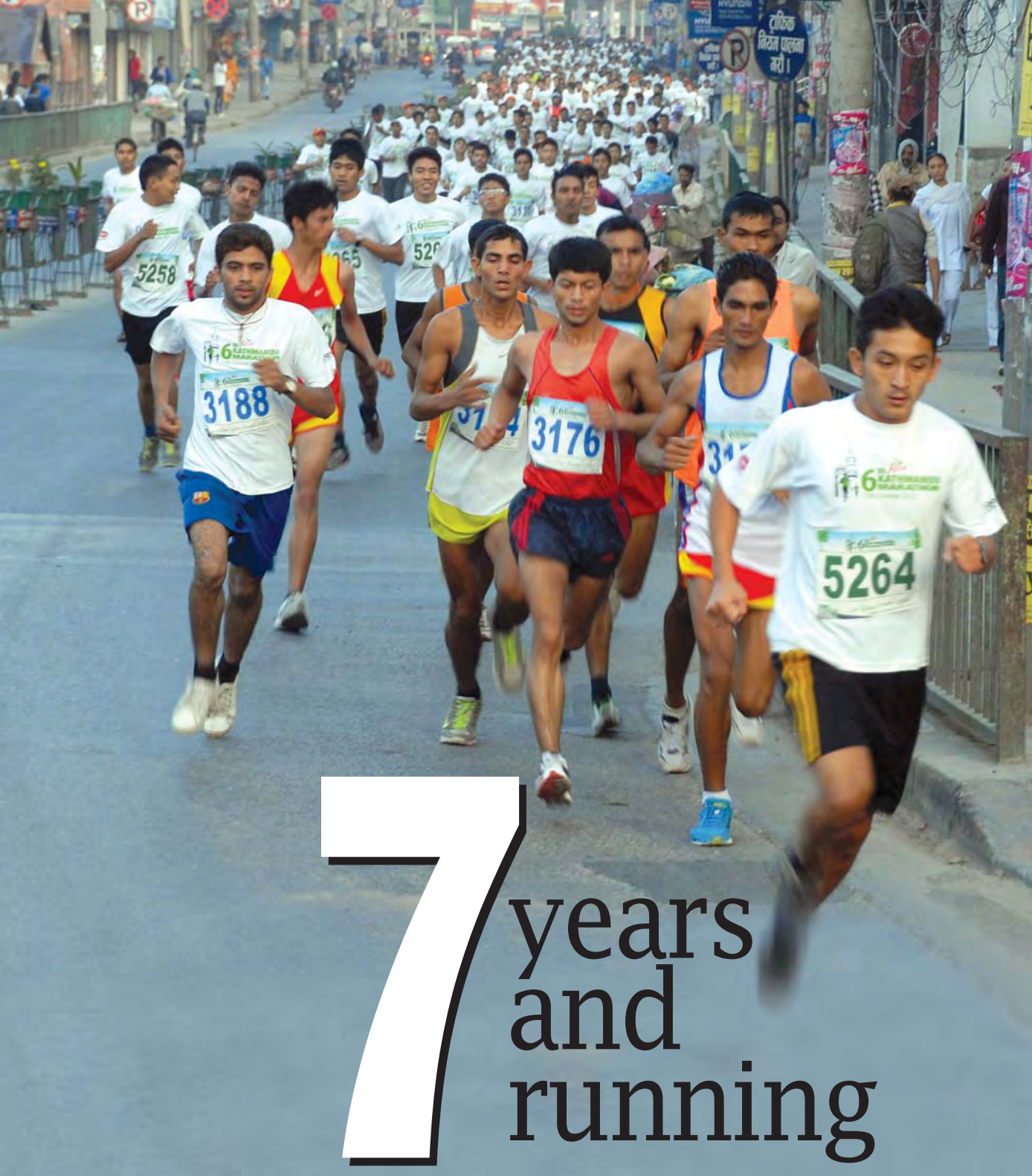


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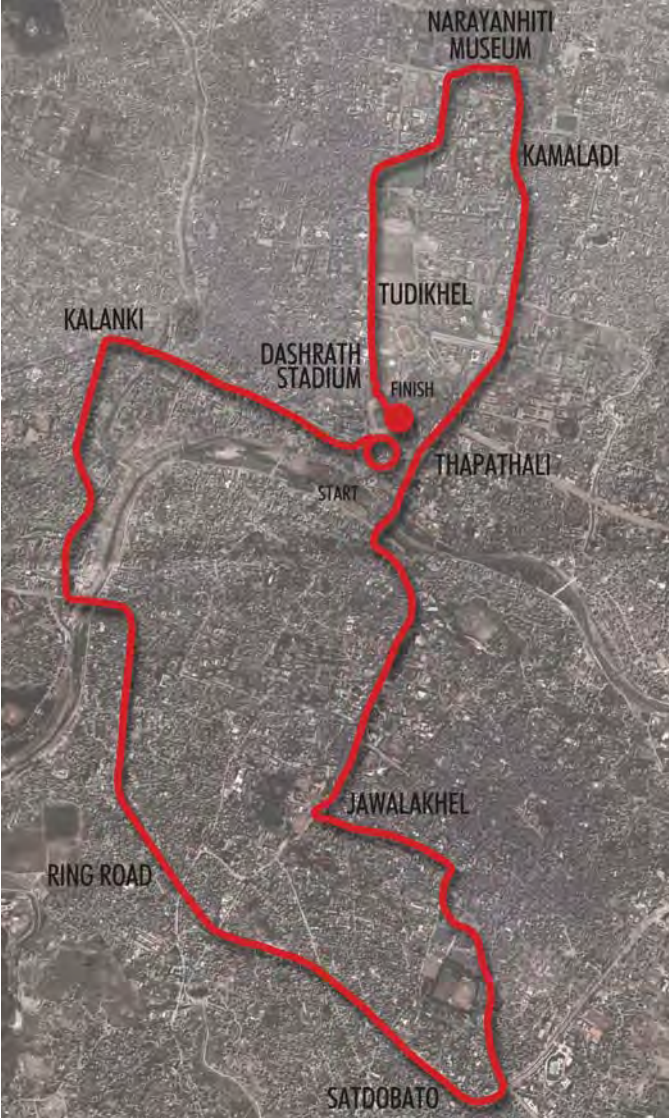
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7 years and running



ON TRACK

Registration	: 11-18 September from 10am to 5pm at Dasrath Stadium
Race date	: 21 September 2013
Reporting	: 5am at Dasrath Stadium
Starting	: 6am
Fees	: Half marathon and marathon for Nepalis Rs 500; \$40 for others
5km open	: Rs 300 for Nepalis; \$15 for others
5km school	: Rs 200 for Nepalis; \$5 for others
3km wheelchair	: Rs 200

While most residents of the Valley will be enjoying their REM sleep this Saturday morning, about 6,000 local and international athletes will forgo the comfort of their beds and race across the potholed roads in the annual Real Kathmandu Marathon.

Now in its seventh year, the marathon will kick off on 21 September from Dasrath Stadium and take participants across 42.195km of the Ring Road's dusty lanes. The faint of heart can opt for the half marathon or the 5km 'fun' race, which is likely to see the largest number of participants. The event also

caters for the physically disabled: a 3km wheelchair race starts from the stadium, circumambulates the Maitighar Mandala, and comes back.

Marathon director, organiser, and former long-distance runner, Nilendra Raj Shrestha, is particularly pleased with the increasing popularity of the race among Nepalis. "Organising a marathon in Nepal is a huge challenge because running isn't a tradition here and people don't quite know what's going on," says Shrestha. "When we started in 2007, around 10 to 15 Nepalis turned up for the full event. This year we are expecting at least 150."

Training for the 42.195km road running event demands a lot of discipline and can be quite an ordeal if you live in Kathmandu. Heavy monsoon rains have transformed the city's streets into rivers and the yet to be completed road-widening project has multiplied the number of potholes. Entire neighbourhoods find themselves shrouded in a perpetual cloud of yellow dust.

For most Valley dwellers, bandas are a huge nuisance. But for runners like me, the strikes are a blessing in disguise. The roads are wide and empty, the air feels much better than on 'normal' days, and there is no fear of being

hit by a vehicle.

"Training in the Valley is easy; there are hundreds of small trails leading up to the surrounding hills. However, if you want to run on the roads, then it is hard to avoid the traffic and pollution," explains Richard Bull, who runs www.trailrunningnepal.org, a resource for trail runners.

Race day is equally likely to be littered with barriers. Most cities completely close off designated roads for such an event. However, runners taking part in the Kathmandu Marathon will have to dodge cars, buses, trucks, and pedestrians on their

way to the finish line. More than 400 volunteers and policemen and women will try to control and redirect traffic.

Shrestha hopes this year's encouraging attendance will motivate more young Nepalis to run in 2014, but his ultimate aim is to promote long-distance running as a sport in the country. "There is a lot of potential here," says Shrestha. "My dream is to put together a group of excellent long-distance runners who will represent Nepal in international events and do well." 🇳🇵

Billi Bierling

www.kathmandumarathon.com

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EVENTS



500PX MEET, join Nepali photographers to discuss the lightbox. 21 September, 8am, Basantapur

Treasure of Himalaya, an exhibition of photographs that document the omnipresence of water in the mountains of Nepal and India. 10 September to 8 October, 10am to 6pm, Alliance Francaise, Tripureswor



NEPAL MUSIC EDUCATION FESTIVAL 2013, don't miss the chance to learn from renowned maestros like Mariano Abello, Natalia Calderon, and Juan Ortiz. 28 September, 8am to 6pm, www.katjazz.com.np

Swim and lunch, enjoy your weekends with a dip in the pool and savour a mouthwatering lunch with

a glass of beer. Rs 999, Saturdays, 11am to 6pm, Waterfront Resort, Pokhara, (61)466 303/304, www.waterfronthotelnepal.com

Click!, join Artudio's beginners photography workshop. Rs 4,000, 21 September to 2 October, Lajimpat, Registration: (01)4002037, 9851182100, 9851180088

A People War, an exhibition of photographs that portrays the reality of Nepal through 10 years of insurgency. Everyday except Tuesdays, 11 am to 4 pm, (01)5549948, www.madanpuraskar.org

Creators, creatures, created, an exhibition of mixed media works by the Italian artist Tarshito. 29 September to 13 October, 5.30pm, Siddhartha Art Gallery, Babar Mahal Revisited, siddharthaartgallery6@gmail.com, (01)4218048



O-ZIL MANIA, Arsenal visit Stoke City, can they overcome their bogey team? 22 September, 5.45pm, Jazz Upstairs, Lajimpat

Bike to music, ride your cycles from Swayambhu to Jawalakhel in the morning and spend the rest of the day dancing to live music. 21 September, 10am, Bhikhel, Swayambhunath, 9851037497



International Day of Peace, showing three films that depict Nepal's journey to peace. 21 September, Sari Soldiers, 11am, Frames of War, 1.30pm, Peace Song, 3pm, Yala Maya Kendra, Patan Dhoka, 9803314034

DINING

Buzz, the food here is good and wholesome and will leave your palate buzzing. *Baluwatar*

Golden Dragon, breathing fire, roasting duck. *Jhamsikhel*

Capital Grill, the American style diner offers a large assortment of appetisers and entrees to suit everyone's tastes. *Bhatbhateni*



NEW DISH, grab filling meals like pork momos, spring rolls, and chop-sueys with excellent value for money. *Khiccha Pokhari*

Délices de France, taste a piece of France in the heart of Kathmandu. *Thamel*

Boudha Stupa Restaurant and Café, bide your time in the free wi-fi zone as you enjoy wood fired pizzas, home-made pastas and Tibetan gyakok, *Boudha*, 9841484408

Bu keba, the organic restaurant in town, offers continental and Indian food along with chef's originals. *Saneipa*



WUNJALA MOSKVA, treat your palette to Newari and Russian dishes in the lush garden with ancient trees and trickling streams. *Naxal*, (01)4415236

Reggae Bar, a melting pot of sorts and a Friday night home for locals, hippies, embassy folks, bankers, and the NGO crowd. *Thamel*

Noyoz, this tiny little joint serves food that tastes like your mother's home-cooked dishes. *Bhatbhateni*

Trisara, with dishes like flambeed prawns, crispy chicken, and khau soi, it would be a folly to ignore its aromas. *Lajimpat*



TIAN RUI, if you're looking for genuine good Chinese food this restaurant is the best place to go. *Thapathali*

Hero

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MUSIC



TUBORG STAGE SHOWS, your favourite Nepali rockstars at a town near you. 21 September, Pokhara, Pradarshani Maidan; 5 October, Kathmandu, Dasrath Stadium

Cancion del Mariachi, listen to latin and gypsy jazz with Monsif Mzibri and Hari Maharjan and drink jugs of sangria. Every Saturday, 7pm onwards, New Orleans Cafe, Jhamsikhel

Shastriya sangeet, dabble in the magic of Hindustani classical music. 30 September, 3pm onwards, Kirateswor



METAL DASAIN, head towards the festive season with the power chord ringing in your ears. 5 October, 11am, Purple Haze, Thamel

GETAWAYS



MUM'S GARDEN RESORT, head out to Pokhara for a peaceful and comfortable stay in beautifully designed cottages surrounded by a lush green garden with great views of Phewa Lake and the Annapurna range. Lake Side, Pokhara, (061)463468,? www.mumsgardenresort.com



Temple Tree Resort and Spa, a peaceful place to unwind, complete with a swimming pool, massage parlour and sauna, it'll be hard to leave the premises once you enter. Gaurighat, Lakeside, Pokhara (061)465819

Balthali Village Resort, a small, cosy retreat with a bird's eye view of green terrace fields dotted with ochre painted houses. Balthali, Kabhre, 9851075818

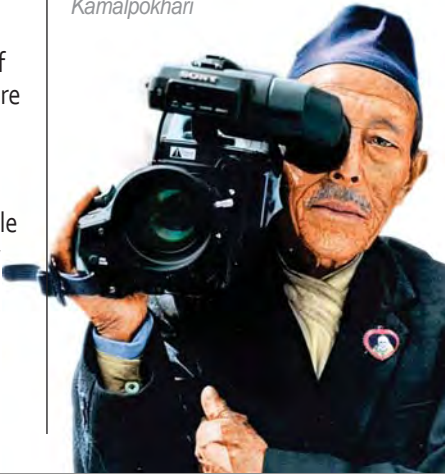
Shivapuri Cottage, escape the hustle and bustle of Kathmandu and enjoy peace, tranquility, good food, and fresh air. Rs 3,500 per person per night inclusive of dinner and breakfast. Budhanilkantha, 9841371927

MOVING PICTURES

The oldest biennial film festival in Nepal is back. Watch out for these great films at Film South Asia 2013:

Are You Listening!, Kamar Ahmed Simon, Bangladesh
Big In Bollywood, Kenny Meehan and Bill Bowles, India
Broken, Kannan Arunasalam, Sri Lanka
Expecting, Fabio Wuytack, Afghanistan
Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread, Satchith Paulose, India
How to Build An Afghan Box Camera, Lukas Birk and Sean Foley, Afghanistan
Miss Nikki and the Tiger Girls, Juliet Lamont, Burma
My Punjabi Love For You, Adnan Malik, Pakistan
No. 62, Pansodan Street, Cho Pyone, Burma
Playing with Nan, Dipesh Kharel and Asami Saito, Nepal
The Story of One, Kannan Arunasalam, Sri Lanka
The Strike, Farid Ahmad, Bangladesh
Transgender, Pakistan's Open Secret, Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy, Pakistan
Yomari Ya Bakhan, Rajni Shrestha and Alok Tuladhar, Nepal

3 to 6 October, QFX Kumari, Kamalpokhari



Stiff rivalry



Games coming thick and fast now that the Champions' League has kicked off. Blink and you 'll miss these tantalising games:

Serie A – Rome will burn with football fever as city rivals Roma take on Lazio. 22 September, 6.45pm

EPL – Can Manchester City make a mockery of Manchester United? Will Chelsea take their frustrations out their London rivals fulham? 22 September, 8.45pm; 21 September, 10.15pm

Bundesliga – Title aspirants Schalke 04 host Bayern Munich but will they be outclassed by the champions? 21 September, 10.45pm

La Liga – Gareth Bale makes his Spanish debut as Real Madrid take on Getafe. 22 September, 10.45pm

ONCE UPON A TIME



Ekadeshma short film festival is back. After a raging success last time, this year's film fest will have one more day of discussions and films - national and international. Watch out for the world premiere of the following:

Manashi, dir. Kiran Pokhrel
Chhora, dir. Subarna Thapa
Sahashi Chhori, dir. Erin Galey
The Contagious apparitions of Dambarey Dendrite, dir. Pooja Gurung and Bibhusan Basnet

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PICS COURTESY: CAROL BUCKLEY



Working elephants have nothing to lose

LUCIA DE VRIES in CHITWAN

Man Kali is a 35-year-old working elephant in Chitwan. She and her two off-spring, eight-year old Prakriti Kali and seven-month old Hem Gaj, recently became Nepal's first working elephants to be rehabilitated in a chain-free pen.

The enclosure in Chitwan houses six elephants, ranging in age from seven months to over 70. All of the pachyderms here used to be chained with their front legs hobbled together, preventing natural posturing or healthy physical activity. The corral also had a fence that administered a mild electric shock upon contact. It has since been replaced with a solar-powered fence that transmits a clicking sound. The elephants naturally avoid the fence because their ears are so sensitive.

NOT SO THICK-SKINNED: (From top, down) Carol Buckley with mahouts in Chitwan examine the feet of elephants. The sole of a privately-owned working elephant in Chitwan. A family of domesticated elephants look happier inside a chain-free corral in Chitwan. Solar-powered fences that carry an electric current or emit clicking sounds can also be used to deter wild elephant attacks on settlements.

This innovative project was started by the Nepal Trust for Nature Conservation (NTNC), the Biodiversity Conservation Centre, and Carol Buckley of Elephant Aid International.

"The tourism industry profits immensely from elephants and yet the animals are looked after so poorly," says Buckley, who received a 2001 Genesis Award in recognition of her innovative work and was named a Hero for The Planet by Time magazine.

She hopes that the first-of-its-kind corral will encourage others to improve the living standards of Nepal's estimated 208 domesticated elephants. Elephants are employed for tourism safaris and anti-poaching activities of national parks. Yet they suffer from a lack of proper diet, veterinary care, clean stables and the ability to express natural behaviour, all while frequently being overworked, overloaded and abused by their mahouts. They also suffer from tuberculosis and diseased feet.

An undercover investigation by PETA India and Animal Welfare Network Nepal revealed that the Elephant Breeding Centre in Chitwan abused elephants. Says Buckley: "On a scale of one to ten, I rate the care and welfare of privately owned elephants in Nepal at a one."

Working elephants also

perform at fairs, play elephant polo and football, and are a feature in marriage ceremonies. Aging elephants have no place to retire and the future of elephants such as Pawankali, the gentle 68-year old elephant which served Chitwan National Park and Kathmandu's Central Zoo for most of her life, is unclear.

Buckley says solar-powered fences could also be used to keep settlements safe from attacks from wild bulls such as Dhruve, the elephant that grabbed international attention last year after reportedly killing over 10 people in attacks. Her biggest challenge is not to convince the authorities or to rehabilitate the elephants successfully, but to overcome misinformation and deep-seated traditions.

"Many people believe the fence is not sufficient to hold an elephant. Others think elephants will go wild if given such freedom from chains. Some falsely claim that the current of the electric fence is harmful," she explains.

The first chain free enclosure has proven that these concerns can be addressed and the welfare of Nepal's majestic working elephants can be significantly improved. 🇳🇵

luciadevries@gmail.com
De Vries is a freelance journalist and Volunteer Director of Animal Nepal



BIKRAM RAI

rise up, you e but chains



BIKRAM RAI

Get off that elephant

Encouraged by a campaign called 'Get off that elephant', coordinated by WPSA Holland, Dutch tour operators are increasingly removing elephant safaris from their itineraries. Some of the 17 travel companies that avoid elephant safaris and games involving jumbos are part of TUI International, one of the world's largest travel service providers.

The saddle and weight of the people create injury and lead to overloading. Elephants can pull as much as one thousand kilos but are unable to carry such weights on their backs. Between rides they are generally chained up and unable to move even an inch.

In Nepal, Arke Fly and Holland International have replaced elephant trips in Chitwan National Park with jeep, canoe or walking safaris. According to the company, few complaints have been received. "If communicated well, our clients are happy to try out other means of transport. And because of the elephant safari traffic jam inside the park, they usually get to see more wildlife when walking, canoeing or driving a jeep," says a company spokesperson.

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The films of Alfred Hitchcock

Sometimes this Must See column suffers due to a sheer lack of good, current films to review. During these fallow periods I do resort to reviewing the classics so that people have



MUST SEE
Sophia Pande

a chance to watch or re-watch all those spectacular films that they may have inadvertently missed or perhaps forgotten.

So it is in that spirit that I would like to revisit the brilliant and disturbing films of Alfred Hitchcock, that auteur who, while undeniably a formal genius, was also deeply and irreparably perverse, disturbed, and horrifyingly cruel to his leading ladies who are now memorably referred to as the "Hitchcock Blondes".

Ingrid Bergman, Grace Kelly, Kim Novak, and Tippi Hedren were all his coveted leading ladies, in films such as *Notorious* (1946), *Rear Window* (1954), *Vertigo* (1958), *The Birds* (1963), and *Marnie* (1964). With their perfect, even features, coiffed blonde hair, and impeccable style these women were to become iconic in their portrayals of damaged women with perfect veneers, often objectified

by their sadistic and misogynist lovers played by actors such as Cary Grant and Jimmy Stewart.

It is difficult to mention any one film that stands out in Hitchcock's very prolific career - at least for me. While there have been instant classics like the four films mentioned above, there have also been a few lamentable misses, which I will leave to you to decide, since naming and discussing them would require a whole other column.



There are also the gems like *Rebecca* (1940), a gothic horror film adapted from that famous novel by Daphne du Maurier starring Laurence Olivier (as Maxim de Winter) and Joan Fontaine (as his naïve and petrified wife) with Judith Anderson in an unforgettable role as the terrifying Mrs Danvers. There is also the taut and very creepy *Rope* (1948), which seems to take place as one long unraveling of a murder, without cuts, and with just a living room as the setting. Equally brilliant are

films like *Strangers on a Train* (1951), *Psycho* (1960), and of course *The Birds* (1963).

Perhaps the most astonishing aspect of these Hitchcock films is that more often than not, even the most 'gimmicky' ones (like *The Birds*) still stand the test of time, horrifying us even 50 years later with their sheer perversity and intensity. Anyone who ever took a college level course on Hitchcock will testify to wanting to throw up everything in their system every time they re-watch James Stewart picking out clothes for Kim Novak in *Vertigo* as he tries to mould her to become his former dead lover, going to the extent of dying her dark hair platinum blonde.

The myth around Hitchcock, therefore, understandably, still persists. Recently there have been two biopics of him, both of which came out in 2012, titled *The Girl and Hitchcock*, neither of which are particularly intuitive. Still, at the end of your own Hitchcock marathon, you can watch them (but only at the end) and so continue to speculate with your family and friends about the legacy left behind by this great but terribly strange man. 🇳🇵

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HAPPENINGS



BIKRAM RAI

WHITE ELEPHANT: People take part in the Indra Jatra celebration at Basantapur on Wednesday.



BIKRAM RAI

LET'S TALK: The High Level Political Committee met the CPN-M on Monday to discuss the latter's pre-election demands but couldn't work out an agreement.



MIN RATNA BAURACHARYA

EXPANSION 2.0: A crane clears a section on the Lainchaur-Golfutar road to mark it for expansion on Saturday.



DEVAKI BISTA

FESTIVE OFFER: AK Ahluwalia, CEO of Everest Bank unveils Dasain Tihar offer during a press conference on Monday.

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Nepali climate activist at int'l meet

From 20-23 September a powerful cohort of women leaders from around the world will come together in New York to draft the Women's Climate Action Agenda at the first International Women's Earth and Climate Summit.

Pasang Dolma Sherpa from Nepal will join the conference that includes a compelling mix of policymakers, business leaders, former head of states, scientists, indigenous leaders and activists. Summit delegates will gather on the eve of Climate Week and the United Nations General Assembly session, as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) prepares to release its much anticipated assessment report.

Pasang Dolma Sherpa is the national coordinator of the Climate Change Program at the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) and used to teach Environmental Education and Sustainable Development at Kathmandu University.

Sherpa spoke to *Nepali Times* before leaving for New York on Wednesday. Excerpts:

Nepali Times: What are you looking forward to in the Women's Earth and Climate Summit?

Pasang Dolma Sherpa: I have closely followed climate negotiations for many years now. It has only been a few years since gender entered the discourse. Women are at the frontlines of climate change impact. They are the ones who have to travel longer to fetch water as nearby sources start drying up, spend more time collecting fodder. This is the first time so many women from diverse backgrounds have come together to raise a collective voice for implementation of gender responsive climate change policy and programs. I will raise environmental concerns that continue to affect women in our communities and their roles in natural resource management and knowledge transfer.

Where does Nepal stand in the global climate negotiations?

Nepal is the chair of the least developed countries bloc at the UN. So it needs to strongly lobby for proper mechanisms including financial support to ensure technology transfer to vulnerable countries like Nepal which, despite its negligible contribution to greenhouse gas emission, continues to bear the brunt of the changing climate.

How do you assess activities in Nepal to adapt to climate change?

Most of the programs here have a top-down approach. Men sitting in Kathmandu decide what problems farmers in Dang or Morang might have, and propose solutions accordingly. People facing problems at the ground level need to be engaged because they will have local solutions to their problems. In fact many communities rely on their indigenous farming practices to cope with unpredictable weather events.

Kathmandu's midrange restaurants have long been trying to capture the essence of American cuisine, a laudable endeavour when you consider what passes for a hamburger in lower-end eateries. One such place (which shall remain nameless) encrusts its patties with cornflakes before frying them on a skillet, and markets these as 'crispy'. Terrifying.

Yes, in order to experience authentic Americana, you're going to have to spend bigger bucks. But that doesn't mean you have to turn to that intrepid multinational franchise—KFC—to get your kicks. American fast food, as much a comfort to expats and those who have worked or studied in the US alike, is being impressively rendered by local restaurants at a fraction of the Colonel's prices. You just have to know where to go.

Southern Comfort, a restaurant that borrows its name (and, rather cheekily, its branding) from the sickly-sweet bourbon, is impressively filling this gap. The décor is tasteful and sophisticated (although devoid of what might have been a more appropriate, diner ambience), and on the day we visited, a lone waiter was all smiles and mashed potatoes - eager to make us feel as comfortable as possible.

SOMEPLACE ELSE



We started with a snack of deep fried onion rings with a blue cheese dip (Rs. 150), and were immediately impressed. This is simple, honest, down-to-earth eating—but executed well and in very generous portions. In retrospect, we should have laid off a little here, as our gargantuan main courses proved something of a struggle to conquer.

Eschewing burgers for fried chicken, served Southern-style with smooth, creamy mash, sweet corn and vegetables (Rs. 450), we were suitably impressed, if defeated. Perhaps the chicken batter was a little too thick, cloying and oily, and the side

of mushroom gravy worryingly gelatinous, but we were too busy indulging in the chicken we have so dearly missed during the bird flu outbreak to complain.

Our other main, a zucchini boat stuffed with a tomato and cucumber salsa, cheese and bacon, and served with rice and veggies (Rs. 400), was even more impressive, with a subtle spice permeating through its dressing and providing real contrast to the blander delights of the chicken dish. This main can also be ordered without the bacon, and as such would be highly recommended for vegetarians amid a largely carnivorous menu.

The best though was yet to come. We were offered refreshing, luminous crushed ice coolers—currently complimentary if you order a main dish—and, though stuffed, ordered the homemade apple pie with equally homemade ice cream (Rs. 270) to finish. I'd come back for this alone: perfect pastry, soft, gooey apples and just the right level of sweetness.

If you're looking for good quality American dining that neither breaks the bank nor combines breakfast cereals with red meat, Southern Comfort is definitely well worth your time.

SOUTHERN COMFORT



PICS: CC

All portions are large, so make sure you go with an appetite to match, or leave with a doggy bag.

How to get there: Southern Comfort is set slightly inward along Restaurant Road, Jhamsikhel, opposite Tamarind restaurant, and a stone's throw from the Moksh complex entrance.

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(Don't) pig out



When Krishna Thapa experienced a sudden bout of seizure, his friends rushed him to the emergency room. The episode lasted about three minutes and Krishna became somnolent afterwards. By the time the 20-



DHANVANTARI
Buddha Basnyat, MD

year-old found himself on the hospital bed, he was less drowsy and was able to answer simple questions. He told the doctors that he was experiencing a throbbing headache.

Except for the recent history of seizure and somnolence which seemed to be improving, Krishna's medical tests came out positive and he had no other problems. After being treated with anti-seizure medicines, his health improved remarkably

within hours and the doctors discharged him at the care of his hostel friends. They asked him to come back for a follow up a few days later and recommended a CT scan. Krishna had no further episodes of seizure, but the CT scan was abnormal. It revealed a 'worm' in the brain lesion.

Worm in the brain or neurocysticercosis is a very common cause of epilepsy among young Nepalis. We have all seen how pigs and wild boars forage the garbage dumps along the banks of the Bagmati and the quality of food served by restaurants is also highly suspectful. No wonder the disease is endemic throughout South Asia.

Infections are caused by a tapeworm found in pigs called taenia solium which are transmitted either through the consumption of undercooked pork or through the faecal-oral method ie eating food

contaminated with taenia solium eggs. Once the cysticerci (larva) enters the human body, it develops in the intestine, penetrates the walls, and gets into the bloodstream. The eggs then travel to the brain, eyes, or muscles and form cysts. Pigs get the disease by eating human faeces that contain the eggs of the tapeworm. The eggs turn into larvae in a pig's muscles which humans then ingest. And so the vicious cycle continues.

In Krishna's case, the cysts formed in the brain, caused an inflammatory reaction, and led to seizure. So whenever young people experience seizures it is important to carry out a CT scan to rule out neurocysticercosis as treatment with drugs like albendazole or praziquantel may be necessary.

Since neurocysticercosis is extremely rare in the developed world, travellers with the disease are often incorrectly diagnosed with brain tumor after returning to their native countries. An important reason why developed countries have few cases of neurocysticercosis is that post Second World War, there was a strong public health campaign to keep pigs away from human faeces and confine them to enclosed piggeries.

With the festive season right around the corner, the consumption of pork in Nepal is likely to sky rocket. Besides following general health and hygiene precautions – whether dining at home or out – only eat well cooked pork meat if you want to avoid spending the holidays in a hospital bed.

Finally, for prevention some doctors advocate taking a dose of worm medicine like albendazole once or twice a year. ☑

GIZMO by YANTRICK

Pocket screen

When you first lay your eyes on the unassuming Vivitek Qumi Q5 projector, you would not think that such a miniscule device is capable of so much. Weighing a mere 490 grams and just 6.3 inches wide, the Q5 is a neatly packaged multimedia projector.

Having consigned the traditional big box-designs of projectors to the past, the Q5 is a sleek and diminutive projector capable of handling presentations, movies and games with ease, while being portable enough to carry it around in your pocket.

Available in 5 colours, the Q5 is capable of projecting high definition videos at 720p. It is simple to setup, and after a few minutes of adjusting brightness and focus, you are able to enjoy your images, presentations, videos, movies, and games on a 90 inch screen (adjustable from minimum 30 inch to maximum of 90 inch). The Q5 is even capable of projecting 3D images, videos and games, although to enable this feature, you would have to buy an extra accessory (DLP Link). The projections are sharp, bright and vivid in most normal rooms, although for best results, a dark room is advised.



Blu-ray players, DVD players, laptops, computers and game consoles can be connected to the Q5 via the standard HDMI cable. The Q5 also supports common USB storage devices, meaning that your images, presentations, videos, and movies have never been so portable, especially when you consider the fact that the Q5 ships with 4GB of internal storage.

The Q5's external USB option supports Microsoft Word documents with '.doc' extensions, Excel worksheets with '.xls' extensions, Powerpoint presentations with '.ppt' extensions, and other files with '.pdf' and '.txt' extensions, perfect for presentations, especially handy during the days you forget your laptop home. Most standard video and image formats are supported by the Q5 and it even sports a decent pair of built-in speakers.

Available in Nepal for around Rs 60,000, the Vivitek Qumi Q5 projector is a decent piece of technology, and for its size, it really impresses. HD projectors have traditionally been notoriously expensive, which is another point that works in the Q5's favour. For its price and features, the Q5 is perfect for work and especially for play, all within a budget. ☑

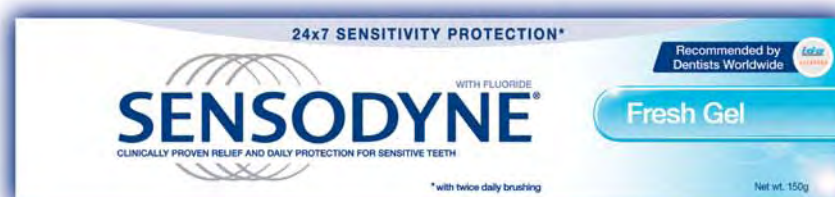
Yantrick's Verdict: Portable and affordable, the Q5 is an impressive piece of technology perfect for both work and play.



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Wagon R vs swish sedans

Will the tortoise beat the hare in the Delhi Assembly election race?

India's sprawling capital is electing a new assembly in December, and candidates are in election mode, including a candidate who shot to fame during last year's citizen's protests against corruption.



LOOK OUT

Ajaz Ashraf

Aam Aadmi Party leader Arvind Kejriwal is campaigning in a ramshackle Maruti Wagon R driven by a party volunteer. Kejriwal sat in the front. He has never contested an election, let alone win one. But his face and name is now well known because he rocked Delhi two years ago with Anna Hazare to press India's parliament to pass the Citizen's Ombudsman Bill to check corruption.

Last year, he was back, vowing to fast unto death, demanding jail for corrupt politicians. He hogged prime time news with his expose of the high and mighty, and recently he was back to fasting in protest against high electricity and water bills.

In between fasts, Kejriwal and his comrades-in-arm floated

the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) to contest elections in Delhi, where the Congress has been in power for 10 years, in response to politicians who didn't want to punish the corrupt.

On the creaky wheels and sputtering engine of the Wagon R, a dream skates on the roads of Delhi. There are no pilot cars or motorcycles outriders with sirens here, no truckloads of people shouting hackneyed slogans to herald the advent of a new dawn.

In this age of swish sedans, you'd think the Wagon R can't possibly sneak past others on the road to victory. But you sense the profound truth of the slogan 'Small is Beautiful' as the Wagon R groans up the flyover. Cars overtake Kejriwal, passengers flashing the thumbs-up sign, and the drivers of three-wheel scooters honk and smile at Kejriwal, as he waves at them even as he talks.



In April, I wrote in this column wondering whether Kejriwal could do an Obama in Delhi, plumbing the possibility of a rank-outsider trouncing India's established political parties. Party sympathisers, or its would-be voters, said, "Really?" Journalists, cynical as ever, declared that I had lost my marbles. Then came a clutch of opinion polls in July-August, grudgingly accepting the emergence of the AAP as a force to be reckoned with.

Having an impact is one thing, winning quite another.

"You still remain just a Third Front," I told Kejriwal as we glided down the flyover. "No way," he replied. "We will win." He cited surveys his party has been conducting. You can't bank on your own surveys, I quipped. "But these surveys did not involve AAP volunteers," he shot back. "They were conducted by an independent agency."

From what I gather, AAP needs one final push to cross the hump of disbelief to spring a surprise in Delhi. Once people feel a party can't form

a government on its own, then they desert it on polling day, fearing their vote would otherwise go to waste. Perhaps it is the reason why Kejriwal emphasises that in case Delhi throws up a hung Assembly, he will take neither the support of the Congress or BJP, nor assist them to form Delhi's next government.

Unless the two contending parties decide on the impossible (come together to form a government) there will be a repoll. "We will get a sweeping majority in such a repoll," Kejriwal says.

Should AAP defy the pundits to form the government, expect a feverish two months of action. Kejriwal says he will pass the anti-corruption ombudsman bill within 15 days of being sworn in. AAP also plans to frame laws which will introduce decentralisation of power and provide the people control over "funds, functions and functionaries."

In providing a glimpse to the people of what democracy ought to be, AAP hopes to fire the imagination of people and, yes, contest the general election of next year. We all know the tortoise won the race against the hare. Might not, in 2013, the lowly Wagon R overtake the swish sedans, which established political parties own, on the road to the Delhi Assembly? ashrafajaz3@gmail.com

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Full text of interview with Kejriwal

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The ghosts of Bhairabnath

The peace process is at risk if we do not make progress on justice for war crimes

Every day, commuters, civil servants, and diplomats travel up and down Maharajganj, along the dusty street that is being widened. The President's office and the Teaching Hospital are across the road.

Just over the wall inside Mohan Shumshere's former palace is the Bhairabnath Battalion where thousands of suspected Maoists were detained, tortured, or exterminated between 2003-2005. It was a concentration camp in the heart of the city.

Lawyer and journalist Jitman Basnet, now 36, was picked up on 4 February 2004 and released on 18 October 2005, enduring 258 days of torture. He was blindfolded, hands tied behind his back and locked up in lightless solitary confinement. His hair-raising story as told in the book *258 Days of Darkness* is a vivid account of what many Bhairabnath inmates went through. Basnet was lucky he got out alive.

Many of those detained at Bhairabnath were civilians in the wrong place at the wrong time. Some were caught when friends broke under torture and gave random names.

Basnet was earlier detained by the Maoists in his native Solu for having written articles deemed critical of them. There were genuine Maoists inside Bhairabnath, too: Krishna KC, who has also written a book about his incarceration, Himal Sharma, and many others. The army had penetrated the Maoists' Kathmandu task force and used



SCARS THAT WON'T HEAL: Jitman Basnet's back still bears the scars of his torture at Bhairabnath in 2004.

information from torture for further arrests. But the method was notoriously unreliable and thousands of innocent people across Nepal were made to suffer or die.

With the mind of a lawyer and the observational skills of a journalist, Basnet tells us in stark and simple words what he and fellow prisoners went

through. His story needs no literary embellishments. His independence gives the book authenticity that other accounts of Bhairabnath detainees lack.

258 Days of Darkness is translated from the original Nepali and reads like classic Solzhenitsyn: 'The strange thing about torture is that after relentless beatings night and day, you don't feel the pain anymore. You go into a kind of trance.' Or: 'They told me to take my shirt off, but I couldn't because it was stuck to the wounds from the previous night's beatings. So the soldier just ripped it off.'

Basnet writes about being able to see the red neon sign of Himalayan Bank from across the road through a gap in his blindfold and of hearing traffic noise. Amidst all the cruelty, he is baffled to see his torturers lovingly fondle a puppy, or hearing bells ringing at the barrack temple. 'How can people like these be religious?' he asks himself.

Basnet tried to find out as much as he could about his torturers and lists their names in his book. Some have gone on to UN peacekeeping duties, some have been promoted in the army and others are retired.

"Many of them took a great deal of pleasure in inflicting pain on us," recalled Basnet who still has scars of his beatings. It was because of Basnet's testimony that the truth about 49 inmates of Bhairabnath having been executed and cremated at the Shivapuri National Park has come out. Basnet still gets threats for writing his book. He is now working on



258 Dark Days
by Jit Man Basnet
Translation
Edited by Bruce Van Voorhis
Asian Human Rights Commission and
Advocacy Forum Nepal, 2009
198 pages
Paypal: \$11

a new book on Nepal's recent politics and wants to put his past behind him. However, he still gets nightmares.

Passing Bhairabnath as the slanting sun illuminated its gates, Basnet looks away. "What a beautiful palace and they turned it into a burial ground. I can't bear to remember what went on behind those walls." 🇳🇵

Kunda Dixit

nepalitimes.com

Video about Jitman Basnet

Immunity and impunity

The end of the conflict in 2006 did not bring about an end to violence and threats of violence. In fact, the culture of impunity is so deeply embedded in Nepali society that those who seek peace and justice are themselves being threatened. This does not bode well for peaceful elections.



GUEST COLUMN
Jitman Basnet

Not a single perpetrator of wartime atrocities have yet been brought to justice in Nepal. The reason for this is a lack of political will on the part of the former enemies who were signatories to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of November 2006.

Frustration among tens of thousands of victims and their families is running high, and after years of seeking justice their hope is diminishing. One emblematic case highlighted their plight: the hunger strike by the parents of Krishna Prasad Adhikari.

Nanda Prasad and Ganga Maya Adhikari, were harassed and driven out of their home in Gorkha by those behind their son's murder, arrested several times and thrown into a mental asylum for demanding a formal

investigation.

Maoist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal reacted by threatening "dollar-funded" activists, condemning the National Human Rights Commission and the Regmi government for daring to open the case. He went on to warn of a "revolt" if the investigations were pursued.

In a meeting with the NHRC, Home Minister Madhav Ghimire cited "legal hassles" impeding investigations into conflict era murders. The statement completely contradicted and undermined the terms of the CPA. These aggressive threats echo those of perpetrators on all sides who are seeking to halt prosecution of such cases. In January 2013, the Baburam Bhattarai-led government deployed the state machinery to work for the release of Col Kumar Lama.

Lama was allegedly involved in the torture of civilians at the Gorusinge Barracks during the conflict period. He was arrested by British Police in London while on a family visit under universal jurisdiction, but all of Nepal's political parties stood with the government to support him.

Many conflict crimes were committed or sanctioned by senior

security or government officials, and the perpetrators have been promoted over the years. Most of the criminal complaints are either denied registration or disregarded. The existing criminal prosecution procedures have been completely denied for conflict-era cases.

Justice is elusive because perpetrators currently hold positions of power in government, police, or army. Without reform, the traditional courts will not be able to resist political and bureaucratic pressures. The community of victims is divided into factions based on political affiliation, and so are human rights activists. Lawyers, civil society, witnesses, and journalists who press for transitional justice are threatened by perpetrators.

To be sure, impunity existed before the conflict. The withdrawal of criminal charges against those accused of suppressing the 1990 People's Movement set a precedent. The politicisation of crime and withdrawal of criminal cases over the years ensured immunity from prosecution.

In October 2008, the Maoist-led government misused the section of the State Cases Act 2049 and withdrew 349 criminal cases against their cadre. In

2011, the Jhalanath Khanal-led government withdrew several hundred criminal cases, including serious offenses such as homicide, rape, robbery, drug smuggling, wood smuggling, and so on.

This trend provides immunity to perpetrators, and creates a firm ground for future arguments in favour of amnesty for violators within the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and Disappearance Commission. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights made strong statements in 2012 in this area, asserting that blanket amnesty for perpetrators is against international standards.

It is said that 'justice delayed is justice denied'. In response to requests to move the prosecution of alleged perpetrators forward, parties insist on waiting until the Truth Commission is formed, but they are just stalling. When impunity is not checked, violence never ends.

Dahal said recently: "The peace process will collapse if past crimes are raised." The reality is that the peace process is at risk if we do not confront the ghosts of our recent past. ■

Jitman Basnet is a human rights attorney and a Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellow at the National Endowment for Democracy.



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Campaign trail

Kantipur, 14 September
KATHMANDU – The UML has instructed local party leaders who had congregated in the capital to lobby for tickets to go back to their constituencies for campaigning. The Central Committee told the cadre who had been lining up at the party HQ and the residences of various parties to return to their districts and prepare for elections. “We instruct all comrades to immediately go back to their districts and actively start campaigning for votes in the CA elections,” the party said.



Rajdhani, 18 September
KATHMANDU – The RPP has announced candidacy for all constituencies in 40 of Nepal’s 75 districts. The RPP has thus become the first party to finalise the candidate list for direct elections. Pashupati Shamshere Rama will contest his traditional Sindhupalchok-3 constituency from where he lost in 2008. Among other candidates are: Deepak Bohara in Rupendehi-1, Hemjung Gurung in Lamjung-1, Balbahadur KC in Dolakaha-1, and Sabitri Puri in Bardiya-4. Chairman Surya Bahadur Thapa will not be contesting the direct elections, and will be replaced by his son, Sunil Thapa.

Nagarik, 18 September
German ambassador Frank Meike told the public here not to vote for parties that organised bandas, shut down schools and gave people in this country trouble. Meike was visiting projects being conducted by German assistance in Tanahu, Lamjung and Kaski. Meike has been interacting with the public and meeting local leaders of political parties here. “Vote for whichever party has committed in its manifesto not to organise bandas,” he said. “Bandas don’t benefit anyone.”



SETO PATI

Janadesh, 17 September
MAHOTTARI – Former prime minister and UCPN(M) Baburam Bhattarai has said that Madhesi leaders would not be looking out for Madhesi interests, and urged the people of the Tarai to vote for the Maoists because his party alone could fulfil the aspirations of the people of the Tarai. Speaking at a gathering at Balwa of Mahottari district, Bhattarai said the Madhesi parties were split and had now forgotten the true interests of their constituents in the Madhes. Hundreds of cadre who abandoned various Madhesi parties formally joined the Maoist party at the function.

Annapurna Post, 18 September
KATHMANDU – The NC is going for election campaigning on a “war-footing” according to leader Prakash Man Singh. Singh said: “We are not going to wait for anyone else, and will not be distracted by other things now.” He said the candidate list would be finalised soon, and senior leaders were busy finalising the manifesto and nominating members of the parliamentary board. Sushil Koirala is getting a ticket for two consituencies in Banke and Chitwan. Sherbahadur Deuba and Ram Chandra Poudel will contest from Dadeldhura and Tanahu. Singh himself will get a ticket for Kathmandu -1 and Krishna Sitaula from Jhapa 1.



“Bottom line: polls in November”

Interview with Nepali Congress leader Minendra Rijal after talks between the HLPC and CPN-M broke down. *Himalkhabar*, 17 September



Why were the talks unsuccessful?
Minendra Rijal: Because of the CPN-M’s stance.

But didn’t the HLPC also take a stance?
We were very flexible. They asked us how elections would guarantee a constitution. We told them we were ready to talk on core issues. Then they proposed to change the government and said they were willing to follow our recommendations to expand the government. We said we could postpone the elections by a few days if it was logistically possible.

What difference will it make if polls are held next April, as the CPN-M has proposed?
We will never have elections if we don’t have one in November. All this talk of April is only a tactic to derail the polls because till now they don’t show any willingness towards it.

They keep saying they are not against polls but against the process it took this time, so how can you say they are against polls?
When we asked them yesterday if they were ready for polls they said they were not. Do you think someone who sets fire to a bus with people in it even remotely wishes to contest elections? What are they trying to do by terrorising the people?

Will it not be difficult to hold polls without their consent?
We have held many meetings to find out ways we can agree on the polls. It sends a bad message if some parties opt out of elections. But to keep the country forever in transition and without a parliament is worse. I think the problem is they are only pretending to be unaware of all this.

Will there be any talks if they don’t agree to November’s polls?
There’s only two months till 19 November. We have our own campaigns to prepare. They were the ones who refused to talk in the first place, so to talk more without agreeing to polls in November is meaningless.

NEPALI TWEETS

Sudeep Shrestha
हरेक मध्यरात घर पुग्दा टेलिफोन छोरीको चिठी हुन्छ। पढ्छु। जवाफ लेख्छु। चिठी पढ्दा जागिर छाड्छु लाग्छ। फेरि उसलाई सम्झिन्छु, जागिर नखाइदुन्छ।
Every day I reach home at midnight and see a letter from my daughter. I read it, leave a reply. I feel like leaving this job when this happens, but I think of her and realise I musn't.

हरि न्यौपाने
धार्मिक सहिष्णुताको लागि भन्दै पण्डित नारायण पोखरेलको हत्या गराउनेहरूले शंख घट फुकदै पुरोहित पार्टी प्रवेश गराए । दोगको कुनै सिमा छैन ।
The same people who killed Pandit Narayn Pokhrel have now welcomed Hindu priests in their party. Height of hypocrisy!

anup paudel
भन्ने गर्थेउ भिये म मोबाइल भए तिमि सिमकाडै हो। सोजो म सोझै बुझे मक्ख परे। तर विचरा मलाई के था त्यो मोबाइल ड्युअल सिम वाला रहेछ भनेर
You used to say you were a cell phone and I was your sim card. If only I realised that some phones are dual sim.

नुवने सापे
एमाओवादीलाई मन्त्रपरार पस्नै उसको रणनीतिलाई घाही मैने माने।भक्तपुर क्षेत्र नं १ मा विजुक्षे विरुद्ध नारायनकाजी र २मा महेश बस्नेत विरुद्ध बाबुराम
Not a big fan of the Maoists, but hats off to their strategy, Narayankaji standing against Bijukchhey in Bhaktapur-1 and Baburam against Mahesh Basnet in Bhaktapur 2.

नुरु वसिष्ठ
अघि फेसबुकमा पढेको मृत विश्वकर्मा बाबाको पुजा गछेन, त्रिउडा विश्वकर्मासाइ मन्दिर छिने दिदैन् ।
Read on FB: People worship the late Bishwakarma baba, but don't let the living Bishwakarmas enter temples.

WEEKLY BAZAR POLL #28

In weekly polls conducted with the support of The Asia Foundation, Himal Khabarpatrika asks 375 respondents in 12 cities across Nepal every Monday for their opinion on contemporary issues. This week’s result of interviews is about Nepalis’ opinion on politicians.

- Which politician do you trust the most?**
- Sushil Koirala 15.2%
 - Baburam Bhattarai 11.8%
 - Pushpa Kamal Dahal 10.1%
 - Madhab Kumar Nepal 9.6%
 - Jhalnath Khanal 6.7%
 - Kamal Thapa 6.5%
 - Sher Bahadur Deuba 5.9%
 - KP Oli 5.9%
 - Mohan Baidya 2.2%
 - Ram Chandra Poudel 2.2%
 - Mahanta Thakur 2.2%
 - Upendra Yadav 1.1%
 - Bijay Gachhedar 1.1%

“I quit communism”

Milan Limbu in *MySansar.com*, 15 September



As a reporter, I was invited to Paris Danda on Saturday at the Maoist HQ for a function to welcome a cadre defecting to the UCPN(M). We were invited at 8:30 because Prachanda had to dash off to the Tarai to make some speeches. The function was in the hall where party spokesman Agni Sapkota briefs journalists every Saturday morning.

I sat on a straw mat next to 3 or 4 boys wearing daura suruwal and holy sandalwood paste on their foreheads. Sapkota was reading out the names of those being inducted into the party. Then he said that members of the All Nepal Priests Federation were also joining the Maoist party. Prachanda rubbed vermilion on them and they became communists. Then, on Sapkota’s orders, there was the sound of holy conch shells being blown, and bells rang out with the chanting of Sanskrit mantras.

This was too much for me. I was once a true believer in the Maoist ideology. Where was the philosophy we had been indoctrinated in? I am a person who actually believed in Maoism and fought for it. We were told that religion was the opiate of the masses. We are supposed to have got over our

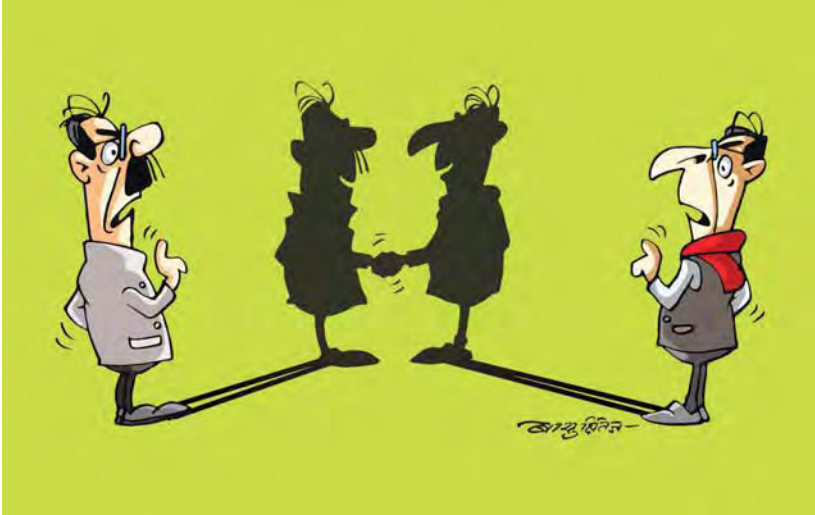


addiction to religion. Sitting there on Saturday I felt our leaders were stoned on that opium.

The leaders had brainwashed me to join the revolution. Communists are supposed to believe in materialism and scientific analysis, they said, but it turned out to be a trick. Lately I have also come to believe in identity, so I was in a way glad that the priests were establishing their identity within the party. There is no rule that says Hindu priests can’t be communists, I thought. But I was also disillusioned to see how corrupt those who call themselves communist have become.

Om Shanti. The Sanskrit mantras were being chanted, and I suddenly caught a glimpse of Prachanda’s visage. The moustachioed commander of our guerrilla force was smiling. I felt like telling him: “You tricked us all, and now you are showing your true face.” I looked at the other comrades, they all seemed to be enjoying the show.

The leaders of the Maoists took advantage of a lot of Nepalis like me. As a Limbu boy, I set aside my Kirat culture, language, religion and festivals to join the revolution. It shocked me to recollect my past. Now I am a journalist. I left the party 7 years ago. I quit communism. I have had enough of Maoism, Leninism, Marxism and all other -isms. I will go back to my Limbu identity.



अन्नपूर्ण पोष्ट Basu Kshitiz in *Annapurna Post*, 13 September

QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“Yes, we attacked the bus in Banepa and set fire to it. The bus was openly defying our call for a strike. It is a small price to pay for the cause of saving the country.”

CPN-M’s Netra Bikram Chand “Biplab” on *BBC Nepali* 18 September

Marriage made in hell



26-year-old Laxmi Tamang's Korean visa was about to expire when a fellow Nepali told her she could stay here for longer if she got married to a local. Laxmi agreed and forked out Rs 340,000 to pay a 'marriage bureau'—spouse finding agent—back in Nepal to find her a suitable man.

Laxmi herself had no part to play in selecting her bridegroom, but she was looking forward to a comfortable life and well-paying job that she had been promised. When she got to Incheon she found out her husband was an abusive 61-year-old alcoholic who beat her mercilessly.

For the last six months, Laxmi has been getting treatment for her injuries at a local hospital and has nowhere to go for legal counsel. She is not alone. Up to 1,050 young Nepali women who

REAL DEAL: Official records at Kavre's District Development Office showing the marriage registration of a Nepali woman and a Korean man (above). Laxmi Tamang waits as she gets treatment at her husband's home city of Incheon (right).

have come to Korea on a blind-date marriage deal brokered by agents in Kathmandu have become victims of domestic abuse by husbands more than twice their age.

When a Korean man wants to marry a Nepali girl he pays up to Rs 1.2 million to a Nepali agent in Korea. Then local agents back in Nepal will trawl through their home districts to find someone who is willing to pay up to Rs 1 million to get to Korea. After this, the local agent buys off district office employees to acquire all

legal papers for marriage. "We can't do anything since all the papers will be in order and everything will look legitimate," says Upendra Prasad Adhikari, spokesperson of the Women, Children and Social Welfare Ministry.

Most of the women in South Korea on a marriage visa are from Myagdi, Sindhupalchok, Nuwakot, and Sankhuwasabha. Fifty per cent of them are in their early twenties and are married to men above forty. According to migrants' rights organisations in Korea, most of these men are farmers, widowers, disabled, mentally ill, drug addicts, and alcoholics.

"The women coming here want to earn money at any cost, but when they get here it is a complete culture shock and they will see that they have been tricked into it," says Rajaram Bartaula of the Nepali Embassy in South Korea. He adds that most Nepali women who come to South Korea on a marriage visa are living in deplorable conditions.

In 2006, the South Korean government introduced a 'multicultural development policy' to address the rising number of unemployed, divorced, and unmarried Korean men who found themselves deemed unsuitable for marriage by Korean women keen on building a career rather than becoming housewives.

South Korea wanted 1,000,000 foreign daughters-in-law by 2020 to allow Korean men to find a life partner and for these women to live in a country with higher living standards. The mismatch that resulted from these anonymous marriages reached a



low point six months ago when a Vietnamese woman killed herself and her two babies by jumping from an 18-storeyed building.

Studies done by the South Korean government reveal that 69.1 per cent of the 230,000 women who came to Korea by marriage suffer from domestic violence and sexual abuse at the hands of their husbands and families.

The South Korean government has emergency hotline services in the mother tongues of incoming women, but there isn't one

in Nepali. As a result, Nepali women stranded in Busan, Incheon, Seoul and Daegu have no way of getting help because they can't read or speak Korean. And they are afraid to reveal the names of their agents who got them here.

Devendra Sambahamfe in Korea and Neha Sharma in Kathmandu

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Modern day slavery, #443



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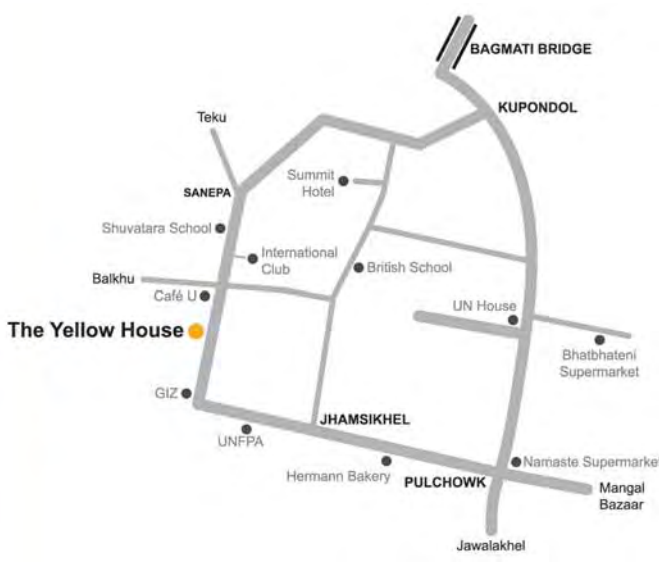
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2 legs bad, 4-wheel drives good

It had to come to this sooner or later: the sight of Brahmin priests chanting Vedic mantras in Sanskrit with their right hands swaying, and for the grande finale raising their fists in red salutes below a portrait of Uncle Joe Stalin. The top Mau Mau leaders, all Bahun Baddies themselves with names like Dahal, Bhattarai, Sapkota and Poudel, looked on approvingly. This Orwellian moment was straight out of Animal Farm and the most vivid proof so far that the comrades have changed their party ideology to Marxism-Leninism-Maoism-Hinduism and belong to a sect that still believes in human sacrifice. Two legs bad, four-wheel drives good.

The talk of the town this week was about whether the Hyphen Maos and the Bracket Maos would get together before elections. The President, under the mistaken belief that it is his responsibility to ensure stability in this country through an election in which everyone takes part, organised a tea party at Shital Niwas. The Hyphen Comrades looked like they had abandoned the rigid stance on their four-point agenda and would be reuniting with the Bracket Boys in an electoral alliance. NKS and other honchos argued that if the resignation

of KRR as CJ would bring the Dash into the electoral fold, Chief Minister Kill Raj should be willing to oblige. Even BRB could be seen nodding sagely. But someone somewhere put a spanner in the works overnight, and RCP and PKD changed their tune the next morning launching into the reasons why it wasn't necessary for KRR to step down as CJ. Would be really interesting to get the caller ID log for the mobile phones of Lotus Flower and Ram Chunder for the night of 14 Sept.

After topping the list of Nepal's Ten Most Powerful on a website,

Comrade Awesum really seems to believe that he is even more awesome than he originally thought he was, and there is no alternative to him in Nepali politics. For the moment, he has decided that he is going to make the best of the elections and not try to secretly sabotage it. The way he sees it, he has a win-win with ladoos in both hands. If the Dash unites with Cash, it's good for him and if the Dash keeps away from elections it's fine too. What would be really terrible would be for the Dash to contest elections and break up the Cash vote bank, and he is having late night drinking sessions with the Dashos to

prevent that from happening.

The guy who feels most aggrieved by how things have turned out is BRB, who was assured by the powers that be when he stepped down that the Regmi Regime was temporary and he would be the incumbent PM at election time. Which is why the Doc has been pretty openly the one favouring a postponement of November polls. In closed door meetings, BRB pushes for KRR to step down as CJ if that brings Comrade Big Plop and his Band of Merry Bus Burners into the fold.

Thank goodness the Europeans are interfering in our internal affairs. At a time when armed paramilitary police stands by as five or six goons with molotovs can terrorise the country, and when Chief Minister Regmi doesn't even care to issue a condemnation of the burning of a bus in Banepa, at least we have the embassies of the EU and Germany strongly speaking on behalf of the people. But someone has to draw the line at excellencies touring the country dispensing unsolicited advice about our elections.

After all, Shanker Sharma wasn't touring Florida last year lecturing Americans on the need to prevent pregnant

chads. Nor has Suresh Chalise been meeting Scottish leaders to try to persuade them to vote no in the independence referendum. If KTM-based ambs insist on meeting Limbu leaders, however, they should know which ones they are talking to. One envoy thought he was giving a stern lecture to Lingden's mob (which is part of the 33) on why they should participate in elections, when in actual fact he was addressing Palungwa's baffled cadres, who are registered with the EC and already participating.

Have to hand it to Lokman Baba for his attention to detail. Not distracted by the wholesale plunder in broad daylight by his mentors, he has now got Kathmandu's road-widening in his cross hairs. Brace yourselves. Those of you looking forward to the never-ending street construction coming to a swift end before the holidays have a surprise. The CIAA is planning to tear down the newly reconstructed roadside buildings because the street wideners apparently used 18m cutoff when it should have been 22m. Oops. Why not just hand over the road-widening to the Europeans?

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